

Needed Theft

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Some Seattle city council members want to legalize theft when the thief is thereby meeting an “immediate basic need.”

A KOMO News reporter elaborates: “If someone . . . steals power tools with the intent of reselling them online in order to pay for a basic need like food or rent, the city of Seattle may be OK with that.”

This “principle” discards the principle that individuals have rights, including property rights, which it is wrong to violate by, for example, stealing. With the principle discarded, no line can be drawn to limit the amount of stealing one may do or the means

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of doing so. The needs of the person being robbed are somehow deemed irrelevant.

The Seattle plan might have spared Hugo’s Jean Valjean decades of being pursued by



Javert. But the injustice there wasn’t that Valjean was punished for stealing a loaf of bread but that his punishment — 19 years as a galley slave — was so disproportionate.

Food is a continuing cost. Rent is. The immediacy keeps recurring. What if you have a \$2,500 monthly rent?

Well, just gotta steal lots of power tools, and do so regularly. According to the babblers on the Seattle city council, “need” trumps the rights and lives of the innocent. So it’s okay to terrify somebody in a dark alley and grab their stuff even if the victim has an immediate basic need to be left alone.

Seattle has an immediate basic need for a new government that respects lives and property. Until then, let’s hope the “city limit” signs are well marked.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.